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GOOD PEOPLE AND THEIR VACATIONS

Vacation may be a blessing or a task, something to be hoped for or something to be dreaded. To many of us it means only being uncomfortable in a new way; to others it means rest and recreation; to still others it is a source of spiritual debility.

The philosophy of vacation is simple. We leave our usual interests and ways of living, our duties and anxieties, and find rest for our tired nerve centers in other ways of living, in other places, and in play.

Really, different sorts of vacations should be prescribed to different sorts of people, as physicians fit their doses to men's ills. City people ought to go into the country; country people ought to go into the city. People who usually have no time to think ought to go to summer schools and chautauquas. Those who think too much ought to turn farmers, or go fishing, or even vegetate. The reformer of society should become acquainted with his wife and children and practice domesticity.

But just how far can this reversal of life in the interests of more effective living be carried? Shall men who devote themselves sincerely and actively to religious work during eleven months in the year grow frivolous on the twelfth? Unfortunately, many of them seem to think it necessary. It would be difficult to overestimate the frivolity into which good people go in the name of rest only to have their ideals cheapened upon crowded bathing-beaches, in dance halls, and on gossiping hotel verandas. For far too many good people vacation periods mean the vulgarizing of life.

It is bad enough for this to come to people without ideals, but it is worse when it spreads to church members. We have to organize rally days and set in motion special machinery for generating enthusiasm before the rank and file of our church members overcome

the inertia of vacation. Barring ministers who have to preach in order to pay their expenses, few good people need fear nervous prostration because of moral overstrain in vacation.



If religion is needed for death-beds it is needed for vacations. For it is not one of the conventions we leave behind when we go into the country. There is no burglar policy for shut-up souls.

And yet the requirements of the vacation season are not very strenuous and are so elementary that they seem to be axiomatic.

Good people should at least go to church on their vacations. There is many a little community that would gain markedly in moral vigor if its summer visitors attended church services.

Christians on vacation ought to maintain their Christian principles. There is many a country village whose morals suffer because of the carelessness of good people from the city.

Christians ought not to do on vacation what other people ought not to do the rest of the year. An earnest life cannot excuse itself if because of its moments of relaxation other lives lose something of the sense of righteousness and purity and the seriousness of life.

A man does not need to become a pagan on vacation in order to become a more efficient Christian during the rest of the year.



The moral order knows nothing of half-holidays, week ends, and of the calendar generally. If good people are to keep their moral virility they will not yield to the seductions of the "silly season." Even though, like the apostles, they go apart to rest awhile, they will have the Master for their companion. And it is amazing how much fun good people can have without losing their principles.